



Chambers's Journal

SIXTH SERIES.

THE LIGHT OF OTHER DAYS.



DURING the later half of the nineteenth century science has accomplished many triumphs over the forces of nature. She has harnessed them to her car, and made them obedient to her beck and will.

Light has, in the hands of the scientific photographer, been made to penetrate the most opaque substances, and to become the handmaid of the medical man and of the surgeon. The power of the telescope has been so increased that more is known about some of the heavenly bodies than of the earth on which we live. The telegraph wire has encircled the globe, and daily makes us acquainted with the news of events that have happened only a few hours before in the farthest corner of the world. The telephone has enabled friend to speak with friend, and to recognise each other's voices at almost incredible distances. All these and many more have entirely revolutionised the 'ways and means' of twenty years ago.

In nothing has there been such marked progress as in the matter of light. Electricity has triumphed over all other forces, and has lighted our streets, shops, offices, and homes in a manner that our fathers never dreamed of. Between the rush-light and the electric light, as applied to domestic uses, there is a long period. The object of this article is to pass in review the various methods of lighting adopted by man from primitive times till now.

In that beautiful description of the order of creation which has been recorded by the sacred penman, light is very naturally placed first, for it was essential to the existence of all that followed. When the aboriginal races of mankind, in their natural rock-shelters or underground dwellings, produced their first spark, and made it subservient to their rude wants, not only would they appreciate the warmth of the fire and its other uses, but the dark recesses of their caves, or other rude dwellings, would be lighted up by it. This no doubt would develop in them a desire to have

the means of lighting, independent of the fire, and hence the first lamp or candle. No attempt is here made to chronologically tabulate the different methods of lighting used by man; for there was of necessity much overlapping in this as in other matters during the progress of civilisation. In fact, the most primitive methods may still be seen in use side by side with the electric light.

As has been already said, the fire was in all probability the first lamp or candle; and, as wood would be largely used for fuel, probably a lighted piece of wood may have been used as a fixed or movable light. This same method has come down to the present day. The 'fir-candle' was seen in use last Christmas in Banffshire. The 'fir-candle' is made from the fir-trees that are found embedded in the peat-moss. These are dried and split up into pieces of convenient size and thickness; a bundle of such pieces is kept in a convenient place, and lighted as occasion requires, and carried through the house. They were fixed at the side of the fire, and kept burning and trimmed by the 'herd laddie,' whose duty it was to prepare the candles during the day, and act as candlestick during the evening. He was relieved of this duty when a beggar-man came that way and obtained a night's lodging, for which he had to hold the candle during the evening. This circumstance gave the name 'peer man' to the first candlesticks used in Aberdeenshire, 'peer man' being in the Aberdeen dialect a poor man.

The 'peer man' was a simple piece of iron, or rather two pieces of iron, about one inch broad, and about seven or eight inches long, welded together and twisted into the form of a screw towards the lower end, which was inserted in an upright stick fixed into a block of wood. The two pieces of iron were left free at the upper end for the insertion of the piece of 'fir.' The 'peer men' were of many shapes, from the rude one just described, to the more elaborately finished ones which were in use in

the houses of the upper or well-to-do classes. Some were jointed like our ordinary gas-bracket. In addition to the split pieces of fir-wood, the small knots full of resin were burned upon a stone projection at the side of the fire, or upon an ornamental grating suspended from a movable bracket. When the peat-moss was specially rich in oily or fatty matter, a certain kind of peat was used for lighting in the same way. These were known in some parts of Banffshire as 'creeshy cloddies.'

After man began to use fire for cooking or roasting purposes, he would observe that the fat accidentally dropped into the fire possessed good lighting properties. He would also see that heat changed the solid fat into a fluid. By-and-by he would obtain lighting material from this source, as some primitive races do at the present time. This would lead to the necessity of a lamp to hold the fat or oil. As primitive man used stone as the readiest material for his implements, he would naturally look to this to supply him with a lamp. A naturally hollowed stone would serve his purpose very well until he obtained artificially prepared ones. There is no doubt that stone lamps were in use in Scotland, as numerous specimens testify. The oil or fat was placed in the cup with the wick, which projected over the side.

It would be hazardous to conjecture what the first wick consisted of; but when we come to consider the iron lamp or 'crusie,' we know that the wick commonly used was the pith of the rush, which was gathered and partially stripped of its outer green covering, cut into proper lengths, dried, and tied up into bundles, ready for use. The iron lamp was hammered out of one piece of iron, in a stone mould. This was usually done by the blacksmith, and the moulds are still to be seen in museums, in the hands of private collectors, and no doubt at some of the country blacksmiths' shops. They are of one uniform shape, with some slight varieties. The lamp consists of two cups, one suspended above and inside the other. The suspender is so fixed and notched as to enable the upper cup, which holds the oil and wick, to be shifted to keep the oil constantly in contact with the wick. The lower cup catches the drip of the oil, which can be easily replaced in the upper cup by lifting it off until the oil is poured into it. The upper cup has sometimes a movable lid.

There is a remarkable resemblance not only between the iron crusies in this country, but to those on the Continent and in Egypt. They preserve the same general shape, but differ in the material from which they are made. The Pompeian lamps, or at least some of them, might be described as three crusies in one. The cup of the lamp is the same, but it has provision for three lights. The oil used in these Scotch lamps was of the coarsest kind. On the west coast the oil used

was, and is still, fish-oil. The material for wicks was variable.

The candle was long in use, and made in at least two ways. One was by attaching one or more cotton wicks to a stick and suspending them over a vessel containing liquid fat, into which they were dipped and held up till they cooled. This process was repeated till the candle was of sufficient thickness to satisfy the taste of the housewife. These were known as 'dips,' and were far from being uniform in shape, and were of very weak light-giving power. The other method was pouring the liquid fat into moulds, in the centre of which had previously been fixed a wick. The moulds, usually made of tin, produced one or more candles at a time, and may still be seen in some houses. The candle was sometimes used side by side with the 'fir-candle.' Some of the 'peer men' are provided not only with a split for the 'fir' but a socket for a tallow-candle.

The next step in advance was the substitution of tin for iron in the construction of lamps; but these were constructed on exactly the same principles, and were facsimiles of the iron ones. The simpler ones were small, made for hanging, and consisted of two cups, and were provided with a cotton wick and 'train-oil.' They resembled very much the old miner's lamp, which was worn as a naked light suspended from his cap over his forehead. In these lamps the upper cup containing the oil and wick was sometimes simply inserted in the lower one; so that the whole lamp had to be hung at an angle sufficient to keep the oil in constant contact with the wick. In others the upper cup was suspended on a notched piece of tin, as in the iron 'crusie.' A stage of development in these tin lamps which was never realised by the iron ones was very marked. All previous lamps could only be held or carried or suspended; they could not be placed on a table or stand. A foot or stalk was attached to some of the tin ones, to enable them to stand on a table or any convenient place. There was no automatic appliance for maintaining a steady light; but as the wick burned down and the light got low the former had to be pulled out by the hand, furnished with an ordinary pin. With the introduction of benzoline came another change over the lighting of our homes; and lamps were very quickly adapted to this new product, which had certain explosive properties necessary to be guarded against. Here again we had hanging lamps, and lamps for the table, and a combination of the two, when the oil-cup was suspended on a swivel, so that it was kept in a vertical position when being carried about.

The introduction of paraffin has done more to brighten the homes of the people—beyond the reach of gas and electric light—than any other light-producing product that has yet been tried. With it came an entire change in the lamps which may be said to be now in universal use.

In towns gas and its various products super-

seded all other methods of light, and it already stands doomed to be eclipsed by the electric light, which bids fair to be not only the lighting but the motive power of the future.

In conclusion, attention may be drawn to the shape of lamps which were used for burning oil.

This might be said to be universal, not only in this country, but all over the globe.

The wonderful uniformity, not only in this, but in other things—for example, in the flint arrow-tips and stone axes—would seem to point to the unity of the race.

OF ROYAL BLOOD.

A TALE OF THE SECRET SERVICE.

CHAPTER VIII.—A MASTER-STROKE.

TO the British public, who are strangely ignorant of the work of our embassies and legations beyond the seas, that of Brussels is usually considered quite an unimportant one; but if the truth were told, the position of British Minister there is an exceedingly difficult post to fill, there being quite as many conflicting interests at work as at Berlin, Paris, or St Petersburg.

The diplomatic body work silently, and without seeking to attract any public attention. Only now and then, at the request of some inquisitive member of the Opposition in the House, are despatches on certain matters published to the world; and then those able to read between the lines can discern how delicate have been the negotiations, and with what consummate tact and finesse have they been transacted.

Early one bright sunny morning, after I had been in Brussels some three weeks, I had taken my cup of black coffee, which alone served me as breakfast—a habit contracted in the East—and strolled out along the Avenue Louise to the Bois de la Cambre. It was not much after eight o'clock; nevertheless there were many people riding and cycling along the broad, well-kept roads and shady byways. When I had formerly lived in Brussels I used to delight in an hour in the Bois about eight, for the fresh smell of the woods was invigorating and the bright green always refreshing. I had not yet started a hack, but meant to before long. Many smart Belgians were in the saddle, including a fair sprinkling of officers of higher grade and a few English residents. Sometimes the king himself takes morning exercise there on his magnificent roan; but on this occasion he was absent.

I had passed along the end of the lake on the main road, and was enjoying a cigarette on a seat at a spot where the morning sunshine shone through the greenery, when suddenly I heard a noise round the bend of the road, simultaneous with a woman's scream. A moment later I was in view of the scene, and there saw a young girl lying on the road with a cycle beside her. An accident had occurred, but of what nature I knew not. The girl was alone and helpless; at once

I assisted her to rise, and with difficulty she struggled, gasping, to her feet.

'I trust you are not hurt, mademoiselle?' I exclaimed concernedly, in French.

'I—I think not, thank you, monsieur; only shaken—that is all;' and she endeavoured to laugh, but the attempt was a very poor one.

I noticed, however, that her hand was badly grazed and bleeding. In falling she had put out her hand and slid along upon it.

'But your hand!' I exclaimed, noticing that she was extremely handsome, a perfect incarnation of grace and beauty, even though her cycling-dress was severely simple—a plain costume of black serge and a sailor hat with black band such as English girls affect.

'Yes,' she said in fairly good English, holding her hand up to me. 'I've scratched it. Most annoying—isn't it?'

'You must allow me to bandage it,' I urged. 'I once went through some surgical courses, so I can fix it up temporarily;' and, so saying, I took out my handkerchief and folded it.

'Thanks. You are extremely kind,' she said, as I staunched the blood and afterwards carefully bandaged the slim white hand she held forth. 'I'm so much obliged,' she exclaimed when, having finished it, I secured it with a pin she took from her bodice and handed to me. 'I was riding carelessly, and I think my dress must have caught.'

'I'm inclined to think,' I said, glancing at the road, over which a water-cart had recently passed, 'that your wheel skidded, and thus caused a side-slip.'

Then, picking up the cycle, I saw that one of the cranks was bent, and that the handles had been knocked awry by the force of the concussion. It was impossible for her to ride the machine in that condition; therefore, as she had been badly shaken, and was rather pale and her hands trembling, I advised her to rest on one of the seats; first, however, brushing the dust from her skirt.

'How kind it is of you to groom me!' she laughed. Then, sinking upon a seat, panting, she examined her bandaged hand with an expression of dismay.

'Every cyclist must be prepared for falls,' I said. 'Side-slips like that cannot be avoided, even by the most expert riders. You might have been much more badly hurt—broken your arm or leg perhaps. Does your hand pain you very much?'

'A little; but it is really nothing. I shall bathe it when I get home, and then it will soon be all right, I hope.'

'I hope so,' I observed. 'In a few days you will be quite ready to ride again; only, don't ride carelessly.'

'No,' she laughed. 'This will certainly be a lesson.'

She was a delightful companion, and I was inwardly thankful for the accident which had resulted in our meeting.

Only one or two stray cyclists passed the spot where we were seated, for it was in an unfrequented part of the Bois. The lady cyclist's dark hair had become disarranged by her fall; her straw hat, discoloured by the sun as hats will become, was dusty; her dress torn at the hem; and, with her hand bandaged, she looked in sorry plight. I judged her to be about twenty-two. Her face was of that type of beauty handsome rather than really pretty, with well-cut features regular and sharply defined, a pair of black eyes in which shone the sparkling light of buoyant youth, a small well-formed mouth, and a pointed dimpled chin protruding and giving a piquancy to her whole face. She was certainly a lady—perhaps a governess. The latter seemed most probable, judging from her dress. The excellent accent of her English had evidently been acquired at some school in England; her French likewise being Parisian, and not that imitation as spoken by Belgians. Her dress, extremely simple, seemed well made, and her tiny russet cycling boots were of finest quality, even though well worn and slightly down at heel. All these details I noticed as I sat at her side chatting; while she, on her part, appeared to accept my assistance with an air of puzzled confusion, which had its culmination in her sudden exclamation:

'What a horrid fright I must look!'

'No, no,' I laughed. 'It's only the dust. It will all brush off. After a wash you'll be quite yourself again.'

'A wash!' she echoed, laughing. 'I feel as if I really ought to have a bath. I'm horribly dirty. An accident like this is sufficient to cause one to vow never to mount a cycle again.'

'Don't say that,' I smiled. 'In a week I shall meet you careering along again. I'm sure I shall.'

'Yes,' she answered frankly. 'Perhaps you will, for I'm awfully fond of cycling. To tell the truth, I don't think anything would induce me to give it up.'

'Ah!' I laughed. 'I was quite right, you

see. Well, the best course is to take a cab from the gate, and allow me to wheel your cycle home.'

'No; I couldn't hear of such a thing, monsieur,' she protested, with a graceful dignity. 'The cab can carry the cycle. Let us go;' and, rising in obedience, I wheeled the injured machine to the entrance, while she walked at my side, now quite calm and recovered from the shock of her fall. At the gate we placed the machine upon a cab; and, entering the vehicle, she thanked me warmly, gave the cabman an address in the Rue de la Regence, and then, bowing gracefully and waving her tiny hand in farewell, drove away, leaving me in wonder as to who she was.

As we had proceeded towards the gate I noticed one well-dressed middle-aged man riding a chestnut mare raise his hat to her, which she acknowledged with a bow. The greeting thus exchanged caused me to think she was an ardent cyclist well known by sight to those in the habit of taking morning exercise in the Bois. When her cab had passed out into the avenue towards the city she turned back and waved her hand again, then an instant later she became hidden behind the trees and I saw her no more.

During the remainder of that day I was much puzzled as to whether she were a governess or a lady. I had that day a report to write upon certain inquiries I had made in a quarter where it was suspected that our diplomatic secrets had leaked out to the embassies of our enemies. I had already been in Brussels a month, but had discovered absolutely nothing. The fact of being appointed on secret service is, to the uninitiated, synonymous with being appointed a spy; but in the world of diplomacy a man loses no dignity from seeking to serve his country by secret means. As in love and war, so also in diplomacy, all means are fair to secure one's end. War is always within the bounds of possibility, and it is only by careful and diligent diplomacy that the colossal armies and navies of Europe are prevented from coming into collision. English men and women at home little realise this, and are too fond of relying for their safety upon their insular impregnability, without taking into consideration the fact that in case of successful invasion our islands might be starved out within a week. Never in the history of the world has the outlook in Europe been so black as it now is; never has the position of the Powers been so absolutely desperate. Surely the Fashoda incident has shown this, even to the most sceptical.

As I sat writing in the secretary's room of the Embassy the hall-porter brought me the letters which had just been delivered by the postman; for every letter, either private or official, now passed through my hands before being opened.

I laid down my pen, and when the man had gone took from a drawer a microscope, beneath which I placed the edge of each envelope one after another. To the naked eye there was nothing to show that they had been tampered with; but when beneath the lens it was apparent how from the end of each envelope a tiny slip a sixteenth of an inch wide had been cut off by a specially constructed guillotine, thus opening it; and after the contents had been examined and replaced, the open end had been secured by paper-pulp of exactly the same shade as the envelope operated upon. Thus the seals and gum remained intact. Every one of those letters had been through the *cabinet noir*!

Just then Hamilton entered rather hot and hurried. He was a fair-moustached open-faced man of about forty, who had made his mark in the diplomatic service, and expected to be appointed shortly to St Petersburg. I passed over the letters to him, observing that they had all been opened.

'Scoundrels!' he cried in savage wrath. 'Nothing is sacred from them. Not content with tampering with the official correspondence, they must even pry into one's family affairs. It's simply disgraceful.'

'No doubt our friends in Paris and St Petersburg are at the bottom of it all,' I observed. 'As you well know, there's a conspiracy to isolate England.'

'By heaven! and they are doing it too,' he said. 'Have you seen the private despatch which came by special messenger from the Marquess this morning?'

'No,' I answered. 'I haven't seen Sir John to-day. What is it about?'

'Its tone is extremely serious,' he answered. 'It is briefly this: the whole of the secret correspondence between the king and Sir John regarding the secret agreement between England and Belgium, which we transmitted to London for the Marquess's instructions, is missing.'

'Missing!' I echoed, rising from my chair. 'Impossible!'

'But it is unfortunately the truth, and we are in a deucedly awkward fix. Sir John is at his wits' end. The despatch only arrived at noon, and Hammerton, the messenger, is awaiting a reply.'

'How can it be missing?' I asked. 'I remember seeing you make up all the letters into a packet and seal them the day before yesterday. The messenger Graves came from Paris expressly, and took them to London.'

'Certainly,' he said. 'I placed them in the despatch-box myself, and Sir John locked it with his own key, after having placed several other private papers along with them.'

'And afterwards?'

'Graves went away to the station in Sir John's brougham, as there was no cab in the vicinity,

and he travelled straight to London. It appears that he arrived at six, and drove first to Downing Street and then to Grosvenor Square; but when the Marquess opened the despatch-box it was empty.'

'Empty!' I gasped. 'Then they've actually got possession of the original letters written by the king as well as Sir John's suggestions. There's no denying them. Why,' I cried in alarm, 'the tone of that correspondence is sufficient to cause an immediate declaration of war against us by France and Russia. Certainly this *coup* is the master-stroke of our enemies!'

'It is, my dear fellow, and a very serious business for us. Sir John goes to London to-night to consult the chief.'

'And the king?' I said. 'Does he know?'

'Sir John has already sent to inform him. I fear to think how angry he will be, for it has placed him in a false position with the Powers. The whole thing is exposed; England's policy is entirely checkmated, and her prestige absolutely ruined in the eyes of Europe.'

'But if we could recover that packet?' I suggested.

'Ah, if we only could!' exclaimed Hamilton. 'By Jove! it would be the nation's salvation. But the letters are in Paris by this time, no doubt, and a copy of the correspondence on its way to St Petersburg. Our enemies never do anything by halves.'

'How the papers could be extracted from the despatch-box is an absolute marvel,' I said. 'Does any suspicion rest upon Graves?'

'None, as far as is known,' he responded.

'Why, my dear fellow, he is one of the most trusted of the whole staff of messengers, and as sharp as the proverbial needle. He has been nearly twenty years travelling with despatches, and has never before lost a single one. According to the letter from the Marquess, who has personally investigated the affair, he finds that no suspicion whatever attaches to Graves. He believes that the papers must have been stolen somewhere on this side of the Channel.'

'Well, I saw you with my own eyes seal them and put them into the box,' I remarked, amazed.

'Oh, there's no doubt whatever that they left us, but how they disappeared afterwards is a complete mystery.'

'A mystery which we shall have to solve,' I added thoughtfully. 'This theft is about the most daring in the annals of diplomacy. It could not have been committed at a more inopportune moment.'

As, however, I uttered these words the door of the room was suddenly flung open wide by Salmon, the blue-uniformed English porter, who, in a loud, clear voice, announced:

'His Majesty the King!'

We both rose instinctively, and there entered

a tall, thin, sharp-featured man with long gray beard. He was attired in close-fitting black frock-coat and gray suede gloves, and walked erect, carrying his silk hat and cane in his hand.

We bowed in the royal presence; and, although his pale face was unusually wrinkled and careworn, he returned our greeting with a courtly affability, motioning us to be reseated.

'I have an appointment with Sir John,' he said, in English, briefly. 'I will wait'; and then, with a sigh which showed how troubled were his

thoughts, he sank into the arm-chair I placed for him.

True it was that this monarch's life was not, as was popularly supposed, an unvarying round of pleasure. As he sat there silent and a trifle thoughtful, gazing out into the sunny courtyard where his fine horses were champing their bits and pawing impatient to be gone, he retained a truly regal self-possession. Few indeed would have guessed the truth. But it was a hideous one.

His crown and kingdom were at stake.

OFF TO THE GOLDFIELDS.

HOW KAFFIRS TRAVEL.



PARTLY owing to the indomitable efforts of the various railway companies, partly to the rapid advancement of science in recent years, the discomforts and inconveniences of railway travelling have now practically been reduced to a minimum. Yet, notwithstanding the vast improvements that have been effected in this direction, the average European contemplates the prospect of a long railway journey with anything but feelings of satisfaction; and, even when he can afford the luxury of travelling in a first-class carriage, with an assortment of periodicals and the latest yellow-back novel in his bag to help to beguile the weary hours, still he dreads the enforced confinement and enervating inactivity that he must undergo. Not so is it with the merry and unsophisticated Zulu. To him the very idea of a long ride in the 'steamel' (train) is bliss; and no British child experiencing its first journey in the 'puff-puff' shows more thorough appreciation of the unusual event than does the brawny coffee-coloured Zulu of Natal as he takes his seat in a crowded third-class carriage.

The goldfields of the Rand draw a large proportion of the necessary native labour from the neighbouring colony of Natal; and, owing to the high intelligence, splendid physique, and general willingness of these Kaffirs, they are always in great demand at the mines. In consequence, however, of their rooted objection to steadily remaining at work for any lengthened period, reinforcements have continually to be sent up from Natal to take the place of those returning to their women-folk and flocks at home. Generally, so soon as a Kaffir labourer has succeeded in amassing from ten to fifteen pounds, he packs up his usually heterogeneous collection of goods and chattels in skins, blankets, or mats, and without further loss of time journeys back by train to the parental kraal. Here he eats, sleeps, drinks, and—when opportunity occurs—fights, until he feels that his energies are thoroughly recuperated,

or until his pockets are once more destitute of coin. This is the usual *modus operandi* of such natives as elect to become mine-hands; and, as might be expected, the annual profits of the Natal railways are greatly augmented by the system. Indeed, the yearly returns of the third-class passenger traffic show a profit greatly in excess of that of both the first and second classes—classes used exclusively by Europeans.

Before the war there was one through-train per day between Durban and Johannesburg conveying natives; and, although the distance between these places is only four hundred and eighty-two miles, the 'Kaffir mail'—the sobriquet given this train locally—takes some thirty-five hours to reach its destination! Such a leisurely mode of progression would hardly meet with the approval of the more mercurial and impatient whites; but the philosophical and phlegmatic natives make no protest against the loss of time and apparently unnecessary delays along the route, doubtless arguing that the longer the time occupied on the way the more they obtain for their money. Again, time being of no earthly consideration to a Kaffir, while safety is deemed infinitely preferable to speed, why should he raise complaints against the low rate of speed attained by the locomotive?

The third-class or native accommodation is good of its kind. All carriages are well ventilated, roomy, and hung on elliptical springs, causing them to run with little or no vibration; while the electric light is provided in all through-trains. Each compartment is constructed to seat five on each side; but frequently as many as fourteen lusty Kaffirs squeeze themselves in—six on each seat or bench, the remaining two taking up position on the dusty floor at the feet of their more fortunate fellow-travellers. Be it understood, however, that this crowding is not always due to inadequacy of accommodation, nor must it be put down to apathy on the part of the railway authorities. No; the characteristic native love of a 'squash,' and their firm belief in the truth of the juvenile saying, 'The more the merrier,' is alone respon-

sible for the customary sardine-like packing of the third-class carriages.

A general cross-fire of questions and answers, jokes and chaff, commences so soon as these happy individuals have stowed themselves comfortably (?) away in the manner described. Then, later on, when the train has started, one of their number will be told off to spin a yarn; and, whether it be fact or fiction, of love or war, so brightly and eloquently will it be related that all will listen with absorbing and untiring interest. In point of fact, many of these natives are excellent *raconteurs*, having at their command a fund of most exciting and quite original stories; and a European conversant with the language would always find an hour or two spent in a native compartment very enjoyable were it not for the close and stifling atmosphere considered 'just nice' by the Kaffirs, but wholly impossible to sensitive British lungs and nostrils.

So hour after hour will be spent in happy content by these unconventional creatures; and when wearied of story-telling, in order to banish ennui, they will turn to account their really marvellous gastronomic powers. Then lumps of half-raw meat, loaves of questionable bread, and packages of coarse, sandy sugar will be extracted from innumerable bundles. The gritty sugar is emptied into tin pannikins full of water, and stirred until entirely dissolved—at least such of it as is sugar. Into this—to us—unpalatable mixture the coarse crusts of bread are thrust and allowed to soak until thoroughly impregnated, and are then devoured by all with much apparent relish. The *pièce de résistance* of the travellers' meal is, of course, the somewhat stringy and leathery meat, which, tough as it is, does not long resist the Kaffirs' magnificent set of molars. Doubtless after such a banquet many of the participants would hugely enjoy forty winks or so; but the limited space at command forbids the indulgence in such a luxury, and nothing remains for them but a return to conversation and light chatter.

The electric light, too, forms a never-ending source of wonder and delight, and some of the native theories and beliefs as to its nature and origin are curious in the extreme. On one occasion the writer recollects hearing an elderly Kaffir explaining to a number of his kind that the electric light was nothing more nor less than captive lightning. This, he went on, has been

carefully trained and broken in by the white men, and finally compelled to act in the capacity of an illuminant. Whether the native really believed this himself or was merely taking a rise out of his credulous fellow-natives it would be difficult indeed to say; anyhow, the yarn was swallowed by all. Others, again, maintain that the electric light is only 'palaffin' (paraffin) in another form, and no great wonder after all; while a few, less enlightened, claim that it is a production of *tagati* (witchcraft). Nevertheless, all concede that the ways of the white man are wonderful, and that what he does not know about things in general is not worth the knowing.

Other inexhaustible topics for conversation are, of course, the ever-changing scenery, the telegraph-posts along the line with their endless miles of wire, the busy wayside stations, the flocks of sheep and herds of cattle, and the ripening fields of maize and *mabele* through which the train passes on its way to the Golden City.

Generally speaking, Zulus travelling by rail exercise much caution in order to evade contravening the railway laws and regulations; but now and again, through forgetfulness or want of forethought, a native commits some act of indiscretion which places him within the power of the law. They chiefly sin in this respect in alighting from or in entering a train before it has come to a standstill—a practice which in some cases is accountable for loss of life and limb. Not long since a Kaffir woman travelling by train committed an act of folly that might have cost her and her baby their lives. Observing her train running past the station where she desired to alight, she, without hesitation, opened the carriage door, cast her child into the arms of some native bystanders, and finally jumped out herself. After turning a few somersaults she picked herself up, and, smiling, held out her arms for her little one. Fortunately the woman sustained no greater damage than a badly scratched face, while the child seemed to more enjoy its involuntary flight through space than otherwise. The woman was, of course, instantly arrested, and though at her trial she eloquently pleaded extenuating circumstances, was heavily fined for her rash act. However, such flagrant breaches of the railway bye-laws are the exception; for, generally, the natives of Natal are as easily catered for, law-abiding, and honest a travelling public as could be found in any part of Her Majesty's broad dominions.



BONAMY'S ADVENTURE.

CHAPTER III.



As we left the room Bonamy's quick eye detected, crunched up in the fireplace, a small piece of paper. He picked it up, and, smoothing it out, held it up to the lamp. It was the corner of an envelope, upon which was the post-mark, and, in a woman's handwriting, '—s, Esqre.' Evidently the 's' was the last letter of a name.

'See, the postmark is Gloucester, and the date is the day before the necklace was lost,' he said excitedly. 'We must keep it to compare—with her writing.'

'That will be evidence—in plenty,' I cried under my breath.

Bonamy pursed up his lips and looked non-committal. But he put the paper in his pocket.

'It is the other woman's feet that are the bother,' he said *sotto voce*. 'I can't understand another being in it.'

We were walking down the corridor, having shut and relocked the west-wing door.

'It is very mysterious,' I assented.

In fact, the whole thing was enveloped in mystery. I felt even a shilling-shocker would be tame after the night's disclosures.

'It must have been one of the servants in collusion,' I said as we turned down the passage towards our own rooms once more.

'It's a very small foot—whosever it is,' said Bonamy in a cautious whisper. 'Get a good sleep, and we'll think of something to-morrow.' He added the last words as we came to my door. But as he turned to go to his room he stopped suddenly.

At the end of the passage appeared a figure. It came towards us. We both gazed spell-bound as it came nearer and the light falling upon it showed us who it was. It was the governess—Miss Evans. She was dressed in a long, pale-coloured garment; her fair hair hung limply down behind. Her face was white; her eyes shone. She stopped in front of us, without speaking for an instant. Some overpowering emotion was upon her.

'I know where you have been,' she said at length. 'Oh, I know. I know what is in your mind.'

She looked quite different, somehow. She was neither timid nor frightened.

'You had better come and see what I will show you,' she went on after a moment's pause.

Both Bonamy and I had been too much astonished to reply.

'I had not intended to tell you anything,' she continued; 'but now I have changed my mind.'

She beckoned us to follow her. I looked at

Bonamy; he nodded his head, and in a whirl of amazement—at least I speak for myself—we went after her. She led us, as I instinctively knew she would, down the corridor. When she reached the end she paused, and turning to Bonamy, requested him to unlock the door.

How did she know which of us had the key? Had she followed from afar? She went straight down the passage, looking strange and spirit-like in her long clinging wrapper and flowing hair. Then she entered the room, we following her. She neither looked to the right nor to the left, but went up to the bureau. She opened the slanting top, which was not fastened, and then, putting her hand behind one of the pigeon-holes, she evidently pressed a spring, for out flew a secret drawer. And—what did we behold! We started; we gasped—at least I did, and I am pretty certain of Bonamy. For there lay the necklace sparkling and shimmering from its dark recess! There it lay, flashing with a thousand liquid colours, gleaming wondrously!

We gazed upon it with fascinated eyes.

'Yes, you are surprised, no doubt,' said the girl. 'You were so sure you *had* a clue.' She looked at us reproachfully. 'But, as it happens, the clue had nothing to do with it.'

'Well, there was ground for—inquiry,' said Bonamy. He was going to have said 'suspicion,' I felt sure, but changed the word hurriedly.

'Why should you come prying into what does not concern you?' she went on, ignoring his remark. 'It would have been all right if you had let things alone.'

'Perhaps you will explain,' I said in as mollifying a voice as I could. 'It is a little difficult to follow you. We have only tried to help my cousin. She was terribly worried at the loss.'

'It is true—I felt that,' said the girl. She spoke more gently. 'But still, I had nothing to do with it.' She stopped for an instant; then she went on: 'But it would have been all right in a few days; I felt sure of that. And now I shall have to explain.'

She sighed, and for an instant turned her head away. Then she recovered herself, and went on, speaking rapidly:

'I knew from the first you suspected me. Oh yes; you were very careful. You hardly ever even looked at me; but I could read your *thoughts*—"the thought-waves which are going about"—though you did not know mine.' She gave a little laugh. 'Oh yes; I knew you suspected me. Perhaps you are not aware that I came out of church before the sermon, and returned home through the shrubbery, past the west wing?'

She again looked at Bonamy. No doubt she

had been a witness to some of his investigations.

'He all along said we couldn't be sure; it only looked peculiar,' I said apologetically.

'He is very kind,' she answered coldly. 'However, I will tell you how it happened. You have forced it from me.'

I was in such a state of bewilderment that I don't think I realised the unusualness of the situation. I suppose it was about three in the morning—a dark November morning. Bonamy and I in our dress-clothes in the haunted room with this strange young woman. Looking back, the scene stands out, from years of calm and ordinary days and nights, with vivid distinctness.

'I have a brother,' said the girl; there was a new inflection in her voice. 'He has been unfortunate—he—he was always weak and easily led. But I loved him.' She paused for a minute, and then went on. 'He took to gambling, and lost money. And then he was persuaded to—to pass a forged cheque—and it was discovered, and he had to escape.'

There was a look of terror in her eyes.

'He took a passage for America; but they were after him—everywhere, and his ship did not sail for some days. So—I hid him—here. I knew no one would come. It was quite safe. Even sounds would only frighten people away.'

She again paused.

'I let him in through the window—there is a tree quite near; and I fastened a rope securely. I brought him food at night. I dared not come by day. And he promised to lead a better life—a new life—over there.'

She sighed. I began to feel a brute. So, I believe, did Bonamy.

'The second night I had come to see him. We were talking together. He was eating the food I had brought—when—it happened.'

'What happened?' we both exclaimed.

'*We heard some one coming.*' A gleam of what she had felt at the time came into her eyes for an instant. 'Soft footsteps coming along, down the passage, outside'—

'Yes!' exclaimed Bonamy. I never saw him look so excited.

'We hid behind the curtain. We had no light—we were afraid to; and there was the moon. But it carried a light. We could see the gleaming in front as it came into the room. And then—we saw—from our hiding-place—who it was. It was *she*!'

'She—who?' we both uttered.

'Lady Donnithorne!'

I think she enjoyed the look upon our faces.

'We needn't have hidden ourselves. She was walking in her sleep; she saw nothing, though her eyes were open. She went straight to the bureau, and opening it, touched the secret spring. I suppose that is where she kept the necklace—before. She laid it in the drawer and closed it, and then walked out just as she came in.'

'It is most extraordinary!' I exclaimed. I felt as if I had been saying nothing else the last few hours.

'No, not so very,' replied Miss Evans coldly. 'She has occasionally walked in this direction in her sleep before. I found her once trying the corridor door. But of course it was locked. It was odd she should come just when it was unlocked and we were there.'

'Has she done this sort of thing—lately?' I asked.

'No; the last time was when Tommy was ill. She came to his side and fumbled among the medicine bottles, but the nurse took her away. She does it when anything is on her mind. It was evidently upon her mind that night that she ought to have put the necklace away. It was not wonderful that she should go to the place where she used to keep it for safety. And she would have come back for it again. If you had not interfered it would have been all right. I felt sure she would come and fetch it again.'

'Why do you think so?' I said.

'Because she is anxious about it. It will lead her back sooner or later. But now I shall have to tell her. Surely you understand why I did not want to tell her. I should have to explain how the door was open—and how I came to be there.'

'Where is the key kept?' said Bonamy.

'It is kept on a nail in the housekeeper's room,' she answered.

'I think it is best to tell the truth about things,' said Bonamy bluntly. 'It would have saved all this bother.'

'It was not my secret,' said the girl simply. 'Besides, it would have frightened her, even if she was not angry, to think I could let him into the house. Of course she would look upon him as everything bad'—her voice faltered—and one cannot wonder.'

We stood for a minute silently looking at each other; it was all so extraordinary and so unlooked for, it took a little time to adjust our thoughts. Miss Evans was the first to make a move; she closed the drawer with its sparkling contents, shut the bureau, and walked out of the room, we following her. In spite of a blameless conscience, I felt rather guilty as we crept through the passages, and longed to have done with adventure and to be between the peaceful sheets. But the unexpected had still something in store for us. We were approaching Cissy's door, when Miss Evans suddenly stopped.

She raised her head into an attitude of listening.

'I believe she is stirring in her room,' she said. 'Perhaps—but it would be too fortunate to happen.'

We looked wonderingly at her.

'Yes, she is coming,' said Miss Evans under her breath. We heard the door-handle turn, and then a white figure came out and walked towards us.

Bonamy and I instinctively shrank back. But Miss Evans did not stir.

'You need not fear,' she said calmly; 'she does not see you. I have watched her before.'

Cissy looked strange and ghost-like in her pale-blue dressing-gown. Her eyes gazed straight in front of her, as if lost in some far-away dream. She carried a light and walked firmly, as if she knew what she was about. We watched her as she turned down the passage which led to the corridor, and then, when she had disappeared from view, we looked at each other.

'Is the corridor door unlocked?' said Miss Evans suddenly.

'Yes,' answered Bonamy; 'I forgot to lock it this time. I was so—I meant to go back and do so.'

'That is well,' replied the girl. 'Now you can wait and see. Circumstances are not always so accommodating,' she went on, with a little laugh. 'To think it should happen just at this moment to exculpate me.'

'That has already been done by your explanation,' said Bonamy hastily.

'That I do not know,' she replied, 'I thought a little less coldly.'

'It is certainly very wonderful she should do it now. A wonderful coincidence,' I said as we stood there waiting.

'Something from our agitated personalities may have reached her,' said Bonamy meditatively; 'all our thoughts concentrated on the one subject. It may have given the stimulus she needed. We know that consciousness is not'—But he stopped in the midst of his disquisition, for we heard her returning footsteps, and we peered eagerly in front of us. Yes, there she came, walking softly in her bare feet; and in her hand was something dazzlingly sparkling!

It was the necklace!

Our eyes were fastened upon it. I have seen many beautiful diamonds in my day, glorious stones upon royal diadems and amongst the treasures of Eastern kings. But there was something peculiar about that necklace. Whether it was the circumstances which found us there, and the mystery which had surrounded it, I don't know, but it looked a thing of rarely glistening wonder.

We breathed a great sigh as she disappeared within her room and closed the door.

'What will she think?' said Bonamy under his breath. 'Will you tell her?'

'It will be all right, I have no doubt. She will guess what happened,' said the girl, as she turned to go. 'At least she will guess she hid it somewhere. She knows she sometimes does those sort of things in her sleep. And if she does not, I shall suggest it to her.'

'I have something I want to say,' said Bonamy, moving a step in her direction; 'please wait a minute. I feel—I think we both feel—I nodded my head—we feel we ought to apologise for our—our'—Bonamy was seldom at a loss for

words, but now he appeared as if he did not know quite what to say. 'I hope you will forget it. If we had known you better it would not have happened. We hardly knew you at all; and things looked so strange, and we were so anxious to distinguish ourselves.'

Miss Evans smiled a little. 'Yes, I suppose so,' she said. 'Well, it is over now. Perhaps I was unduly sensitive—and I have not slept much lately.' She gave a little sigh. She looked tired.

'If I can ever do anything to show you how sorry I am,' stammered Bonamy, 'you may depend upon me.'

'Thank you; I will remember,' she replied, quite gently. Then she smiled and nodded to us, and went away.

The next morning I could hardly believe, as I shaved and performed the usual prosaic details of dressing, that all this had happened. It was only as I entered the dining-room, and was rapturously greeted by Cissy with the necklace in her hand, that I was sure it had not been a dream.

'Is it not wonderful!' she cried, as she held it up for our inspection. 'There it was, just where I had put it in my drawer. 'Oh, I know what you are going to say!' she cried, as I opened my lips to congratulate her. 'You are going to say that some one took it, and was frightened, and put it back again. I don't think it is that at all. I believe I did it myself!'

I think she was too excited to notice our not very surprised faces. For I could not act what I did not feel to save my life, and Bonamy certainly did not try to.

'Yes, I did it myself, I am certain; though where I put it I can't say. You know I walk in my sleep sometimes, and do odd things—connected with things that have been on my mind. I thought of it at the time. That is why I didn't want you to suspect anybody. But I always have a dream, not of what I have done, but something connected with it. But that night I could not remember dreaming. And then, too, I have not done it for months. And so I thought it *might* be some one else, and I wanted you to notice without making a fuss. And then last night I dreamt I found it—I can't remember where, but that I found it and brought it back again. It was so vivid I know it was the sleep-walking dream. I remember feeling it was cold, and that I must put on my dressing-gown because I had to go to some long, cold passage—somewhere.'

She put her hand to her forehead.

'Helen, I am telling them about it,' she said as Miss Evans appeared. 'I have shown it to her already,' she said, turning to us again. 'She agrees with me—that I hid it somewhere for safety, and found it again.'

We felt rather guilty, somehow, as we made some commonplace remarks upon the occurrence, Miss Evans eyeing us demurely the while. 'Though, really,' as Bonamy remarked afterwards,

'there was nothing to feel guilty about. It was a case in which the best thing was silence. There was no occasion to tell her or anybody.'

'It is a good thing I didn't send to Scotland Yard,' said Cissy. 'I had a sort of instinct not to, though I had no particular reason.'

'A woman's instinct is generally to be trusted,' said Bonamy solemnly as he helped himself to marmalade.

'I don't know—altogether. Now, I had an instinct *you* would discover about it,' said Cissy mischievously. 'I felt quite certain.'

Bonamy flushed slightly. 'I wanted to,' he said, as he took a draught of coffee. 'In fact, there is nothing I should have liked better.'

'Never mind; you were most comforting. You were so interested. You really thought more about it than I did. And so did Bertie. Oh yes, you *did*, Bertie; don't be ashamed of your virtues, like Tommy. You looked quite ill over it.'

I forget what I answered. I remember feeling consoled. Cissy always consoled one so delightfully when one's actions fell short of one's intentions in a matter.

Afterwards, as we went up in the train together, Bonamy could hardly give his mind to even his paper.

'I say, old chap,' he said as he lit his cigar,

'even though we don't exactly shine in this affair, it would make a rattling good story for a magazine. You must write it out one day, when it is all forgotten.'

He reminded me of it as we sat smoking in the club together the other night.

Many years have passed since it happened. Miss Evans went out to her brother in America, where he became a reformed character—so she wrote and told us, at least. The Grange is let, as Tommy's regiment is in India. And Cissy—well, Cissy and I are married. And Cissy still makes me feel pleased with myself; and if I did not know myself very well indeed I might even think I was sometimes rather clever.

After she left The Grange I told her the truth about the necklace, and she agreed that we did quite right not to tell her.

'It would have frightened me horribly,' she said; 'and I should never have felt comfortable in the house any more. But let us do as Bonamy says, and make it into a story.' And we have done so, simply altering the names of the people and places; and Bonamy is going to put it into his new magazine. Though I am afraid, thrilling as it appeared to me at the time, it is nothing to some of the wonderful stories that are now written.

THE SCOTTISH GRANITE INDUSTRY.



VERY visitor to Aberdeen—the centre of Scotland's granite industry—is naturally struck with the remarkable cleanliness and beauty of the great silver-gray buildings that line the principal streets of the city.

No need to impress on him that this is one of the staple industries of this particular part of Scotland. On every hand he sees the amplest evidence of this. At all the principal railway stations stands wagon after wagon laden with rough unhewn blocks of the familiar red and gray rock. Cart after cart and lorry after lorry passes him on the street, bearing to its destination the products of the neighbouring quarries. By his side he hears the busy clank of hammer on chisel, and anon the steady whirr of machinery, as the stubborn rock is slowly fashioned into the separate parts of the architect or engineer's design.

The granite industry of Scotland practically dates from the beginning of the present century. True, of course, for simpler building purposes the stone has doubtless been used from the time when the prehistoric men raised in the north-western wilds of Caledonia those mysterious circles of gigantic granite boulders which still bear testimony to their presence in our midst. But the history of this industry begins with the nineteenth century. Prior to this the great public

buildings of the Granite City itself were almost wholly erected with stones from the sandstone quarries of the north and south. Decorative work in granite was wholly unknown in those days. But enterprising craftsmen were already at work devising newer methods of conquering the hard, unyielding granite. That stone, which ages before had been polished and carved in ancient Egypt in a fashion which our workmen of to-day have never been able to surpass, and which even yet bears testimony to the marvellous dexterity of those ancient craftsmen—that stone was not to lie dormant and useless in the great granite hills of the north. One pioneer craftsman, seeing some specimens of ancient polished granite, determined to experiment on the local Scottish stones. His implements were crude and the hand-polishing process infinitely laborious; but such success as he met with encouraged him to go on and prosper; ay, and in due time brought fresh rivals into the virgin industry. The old hewing-tools were discarded; lighter and more pliant implements took their place; the powerful giant, steam, was harnessed to the polishing machinery, and in itself soon revolutionised the trade. From being a purely local industry, supplying local needs, it gradually extended its connection to the north, south, east, and west. New quarries were tapped throughout the whole of Scotland, wherever

granite boulders reared their heads, until to-day structures of Scottish granite may be found in almost every part of the civilised world.

In Scotland alone this industry finds employment for upwards of fifteen thousand men. A glance at the export trade for a single year will, however, afford the best conception of the various uses to which Scottish granite is now put. First, let us begin with the foundations of our cities; and from this firm standpoint work up to decorative architecture. For the year ending 1897 there was shipped from Aberdeen alone thirty-one thousand four hundred and three tons of granite setts, and four thousand five hundred tons of granite paving. This represents an increase of fifty per cent. in less than five years, evidently tending to show that in that line granite is more than holding its own against the rival wood and concrete materials. Vast quantities, too, have been shipped from the same port for bridges and docks, embankments and sea-walls, its great weight and durability rendering it an efficient protector from the stormy waves of winter. During the year 1898 polished granite to the value of £26,700 was shipped to the United States of America. In this department, however, a steady decline has manifested itself since the enforcement of the McKinley tariff. In 1892 the export trade to the States amounted to £123,565, compared with which the year 1898 shows the startling decrease of £96,865. This loss, however, has been more than counterbalanced by a vastly increased English and colonial trade. South African and even Australian markets have developed rapidly; whilst with London and the larger cities of the south a successful trade in polished fronts for shops and public buildings has now been established. As the cost of an American granite monument averages from £15 to £20, whilst the cost of a polished shop-front varies from £500 to £2000, it will readily be seen that the loss of the American trade has not been so disastrous as it might otherwise have been. But the trade in polished fronts is not confined to Britain. Decorative work in Scottish granite now adorns the streets of the principal cities of Holland and Belgium, of France and Switzerland. Last year a costly and handsome monument was sent to Buenos Ayres, there to be erected over the grave of a famous merchant-prince; another scarcely less valuable went to France to mark the resting-place of one of her most famous public men; whilst yet another specimen of finely-polished Peterhead granite, covered with quaint Chinese characters, went to occupy a prominent place in one of the many temples of the Flowery Land. An Aberdeen firm is perhaps still executing an order from President Kruger's Government for a lasting monument to commemorate the repulse of Dr Jameson and the triumph of 'law and order' in the Transvaal Republic.

During the last few years special attention has been paid to the cultivation of artistic work in

granite. Under the auspices of the Granite Association, the Master Masons' Association, and the Operative Masons' and Granite-cutters' Union, there has been established at Robert Gordon's College, Aberdeen, a very successful class for training the younger workmen in the arts of modelling and sculpture. Judging from the results already achieved, this special and systematic training of the *élite* of the younger craftsmen promises to create in Scotland a band of skilful sculptors whose work will yet reflect great credit on the whole granite industry of the north.

The principal granite quarries in Scotland are Rubislaw, Kemnay, Persley, Dancing Cairns, and Dunecht—all near Aberdeen; and Peterhead, Oban, the Isle of Mull, the island of Arran, and Craignair and Creetown in Kirkcudbrightshire. Other districts of course there are; but they are mainly of lesser repute. The Kirkcudbrightshire granite is largely employed in dockwork and bridges, having been satisfactorily used in such works as the Swansea docks, and the Liverpool, Birkenhead, and Newport docks. The famous rich red granite quarried at Stirling Hill, Peterhead, is highly prized for its beautiful colour and fine texture, and is largely used for polished columns, pilasters, and cornices. Fine specimens of this granite may be seen in the pillars of the Carlton Clubhouse, London, and the handsome columns of St George's Hall, Liverpool. From Dunecht quarries were extracted the stones used in building Dunecht House, lately the property of the Earl of Crawford and Balcarres. This magnificent building, erected by Messrs F. Christie & Son, is undoubtedly the finest specimen of granite architecture in the United Kingdom. For amount of output, however, Rubislaw quarry remains perhaps unrivalled. Standing on the eastern side of the little hill, our gaze is soon riveted by the magnitude of the operations. 'The half o' Aiberdeen has come oot o' that hole,' the workmen there will tell you. Far, far down at the bottom of the jagged cliffs one sees men seemingly scarce bigger than a large doll drilling and splitting great blocks of rock; others are scattered round the rough granite walls preparing for blasting operations. Suddenly the shrill summons of a steam-horn breaks through the air, and the pigmy quarrymen with one accord strike for the summit. As they emerge, one notes with some amazement that, so far from being the dwarfs which the depth of the quarry had depicted them, they are as sturdy and stalwart a band of workmen as one could meet in 'Aiberdeen an' twal' mile roon' (for, *sub rosa* be it said, to the true Aberdonian the world beyond that limit is of 'vera sma' accoont'). No sooner is a place of safety reached than a tremendous report bursts forth, accompanied by a shaking of the earth as if by a tiny earthquake. After the smoke has wholly cleared away we return to the edge of the great granite pit once more. At the bottom now lie vast boulders of

granite, weighing in all perhaps over a hundred tons. Soon the quarrymen are at work again, cutting those boulders into blocks of convenient size. Nothing—absolutely nothing—is wasted. First, the larger stones are raised by a powerful Blondin crane to the level of the ground, drawn along an enormous overhanging wire rope to the loading-bank, deposited on lorries, and promptly driven off to be hewn and carved into monuments, pillars, and pedestals. Follow next the smaller building-stones, then the still smaller blocks for granite setts, and yet again still smaller chips for rubble walling. In one of the neighbouring quarries in particular this economy of materials is carried yet one step further. Even the stones which the builders reject are cast into a powerful crushing-machine, ground to the required size, and utilised in the manufacture of 'adamant paving,' an artificial substitute for granite or sandstone.

A large and most valuable piece of rock at Kemnay Quarries, Aberdeenshire, was recently loosened from its bed and shifted to where it could be conveniently cut into the sizes desired. The work preparatory to blasting was in progress for some weeks. Along the back of the huge mass a series of twelve holes, each over twenty feet deep, were bored by means of the steam boring-machine. These were charged with powder, and fired simultaneously by means of electricity. A

succession of eight charges were fired in order to loosen or shake the mass from its 'bed' (or, more properly, as applied to granite, 'fault'). This having been done, the final or larger charge was given, and so well had the quantity of powder required been calculated that the immense block was simply shifted forward into the desired place. The rock was of first-class quality, and the block displaced weighs over nine thousand tons. Some idea of the size of this block may be gathered from the fact that eleven hundred and twenty-five railway wagons were required for its transport, or a single train over four miles long.

By stepping-stones, such as those we have described, by dint of enterprise, economy, and foresight, the Scottish granite industry has reached at last its present proud position in the north. Yet, successful though it has been in the past, there is no reason to believe that the hey-day of its prosperity is gone. At home and abroad a growing demand for artistic granite produce still continues. In lands far distant its fame and worth have been discovered; and whilst the hands of Scotland's craftsmen lose not their cunning nor their eyes grow dim to appreciate the beautiful and artistic in their work, the granite industry of the north will be a source of pride and profit to all who have at heart the prosperity of our national industries.

A MAID AND TWO SWORDS.

By Professor C. G. D. ROBERTS.



MADEMOISELLE DE LALANNE was in a gay mood that night. She was very happy, and might therefore have been expected to be kind. On the contrary, with a woman's title to the unexpected, she was filled for the moment with a kind of radiant malice; an impulse to be delicately cruel lurked behind the tender scarlet curve of her lips, and the wide innocence of her bewildering eyes hid very successfully a merciless desire to wound the two men who hung upon her words. From time to time, after a coquetry more audacious than usual, she would glance half-repentantly at the closed door, as if looking for yet another visitor. Her mother, Madame de Lalanne, an elderly gentlewoman of Quebec, who had declined into a rustic dullness after years of life among the good country-folk of Acadia, dozed over her knitting beside the ample hearth.

Mademoiselle was dressed in a shortish skirt of the pattern worn by the country girls. The material, however, was not of the coarse wool of the district, but a heavy homespun linen bleached to the tint of cream; the bodice was of the same stuff, with sleeves turned back at the elbows to

show arms that were slim almost to thinness, but milk-white and bewitchingly moulded. Over her shoulders was thrown carelessly a shawl of fine silk, black, but no blacker than the silken hair above it. On her small, slim feet, one of which kept restlessly tapping the floor, she wore shoes of fine scarlet leather. These little shoes every girl in Acadia had heard of and discussed with jealous admiration; but few indeed, even of the Grand Pré maids, had seen them, for the De Lalanne, mindful of their past seigneurial pride, maintained much of their aloofness amid their changed fortunes.

Beautiful as was her face, broad-browed, finely chiselled, white with the warm whiteness of ivory, it was above all her eyes that made Marie de Lalanne the wonder of all Acadia. When she turned their dark radiance from time to time full upon her two cavaliers, both felt their hearts jump painfully, and each burned with a fierce impulse to pitch the other from the nearest window.

This tempting window, low and broad, looked out across a snowy slope that sparkled under the full moon. At the foot of the slope, visible from mademoiselle's chair, a close hedge of young

fir-trees hid the channel of the Gaspereau River. A sullen grinding roar from the flood-tide ached among the ice-cakes was heard in the quiet room whenever the light talk flagged. It flagged often, as moments of absent-mindedness crossed mademoiselle's whimsical mood; but it never flagged for long, seeing that it was her pleasure to be gay that night. The white moonlight, too, came in through the window and mixed curiously with the leaping red firelight and the pale yellow of the two candles that stood on the brick chimneypiece, and added inextricable complications to the enigmatic lights that flamed softly from mademoiselle's eyes.

The two young men upon whose passions she was playing so recklessly had come to Grand Pré village that same evening from opposite directions. Both had made all haste out over the hill to the old farmhouse by the Gaspereau. Captain Barras, journeying on snow-shoes from the French post at Chignecto, had arrived first, flushed with elation at finding mademoiselle alone—for Madame de Lalanne was ever too sunk in old dreams to count as a personality. Scarcely had he bowed his devoirs over the little restless white hand which mademoiselle was wont to use as mercifully as her eyes, when there came from the hunting-fields behind La Hève the spare, sombre-suited, silent figure of Jean Michel Landry de Latour, the proud and impoverished descendant of the De Latours of Port Royal and St John.

Now, on the coming of Captain Barras mademoiselle had not been over-gracious. She had been merely *ennuyée*. It was when De Latour arrived that the caprice of gaiety had seized upon her. What were these unencouraged suitors for, indeed, if not to furnish amusement through the hour of waiting before her? On the instant she was all gracious.

'I trust your absence from Grand Pré has not seemed as long to you as it has to us, monsieur!' she murmured, as De Latour kissed her finger-tips and shot a glance of dark disdain at Barras.

The captain's mouth grew dry suddenly, as he perceived in this changed demeanour of his hostess an explanation of the chill civility which had greeted his own arrival. But in the next moment those restless eyes flashed upon him something that thrilled like a caress; and straightway, remembering all that he was and his rival was not—rich, handsome, and in high favour with the Governor at Quebec—he returned the new-comer's glance with interest.

When mademoiselle presented the two, De Latour's curt formality was a veiled declaration of war, while the elaborate courtesy of Barras was an exquisite insolence. And mademoiselle was sinfully delighted.

The demeanour of the two men contrasted sharply. Barras, not long from the revels and lightness of Quebec, hung boldly on mademoiselle's

glances, and his vanity was facile game to her. He could not take his eyes from her face, except to dart an occasional look of supercilious impatience at the intruder who, as he now felt convinced, alone stood in the way of his conquest. De Latour, on the other hand, while ever seeking the glances which enthralled him, seemed ever unable to endure their light. Whenever he encountered them he would drop his own eyes—and quietly fearless eyes they were in the customary matters of battle and peril—from the too dazzling brilliancy of her face to the daintiness of her scarlet shoes. He seldom troubled to look at his rival; but his reserve managed somehow to express quite unmeasured depths of contempt. He spoke little, even to mademoiselle, but that little always had point. The burden of the conversation was borne by Barras, who had a flow of glittering compliment at command. Mademoiselle de Lalanne had but to direct the game, now with deft turn of phrase, now with a smile, now with a swift look; and with such wicked nicety of skill did she direct it that within the half-hour the air of that peaceful chamber seemed full of swords. At this point, however, she kept things under curb, so that neither man dared in the least degree ruffle the shining surface of civility which she had spread between them. Madame de Lalanne sank so deep into her dreams that her knitting fell unheeded to the floor, and was seized upon by a gratified black kitten. One of the candles on the chimneypiece guttered spitefully and went out. The ghostly patch of moonlight moved across the floor till it touched and paled the scarlet of mademoiselle's shoes. Then, on a sudden, just as she opened her lips for some sally more sweetly envenomed than any that had gone before, the faint sound of a footstep in another part of the house caught her ear. No one else heard it; but it was what she was waiting for. Her face softened, and she sprang up.

'Excuse me, messieurs,' she said hastily; 'I have forgotten something.' And in a breath she was gone, closing the door behind her, and leaving the two men to stand with blank faces staring after her.

So they stood for a moment, then turned to each other. De Latour spoke first.

'Your society is distasteful to me, Captain Barras!' said he coldly.

'I can quite imagine it, monsieur!' murmured Barras, with the most courteous intonation. 'Different, I suppose, from that to which you are accustomed!'

De Latour smiled grimly. Mere verbal repartee seemed to him little worth while when the retort of the sword was in question.

'Nevertheless,' said he, 'I could tolerate it for a short time under other conditions. Behind yonder fir-trees there is a level space by the side of the water, where the moon shines clearly. I

could meet you there with pleasure, so it be at once, monsieur !'

Barras's bold eyes flashed. This was just what he wanted. Yet, for the mere insolence of it, he affected to hesitate.

'Your appearance is against you, monsieur,' he drawled; 'but—yes, you are received by Mademoiselle de Lalanne, and therefore I may without dishonour cross swords with you. His Excellency would understand, I am sure.' Suddenly dropping his fine manners, he went out brusquely, leaving De Latour to follow. But the iron face of the wood-ranger (for such he was) was untroubled by the insult. He felt only compassion for the ignorance of a Canadian who knew not the precedence of the De Latours.

The two strode in silence, side by side, down the crisply glittering slope, their distorted black shadows dancing grotesquely behind them. When they were within about a hundred paces of the fir-grove Mademoiselle de Lalanne returned to the room they had so hastily forsaken. Her face was now more softly radiant, and the laughing malice had died out of her eyes. Close at her skirts came a tall, fair-haired, ruddy-featured man, with 'English' written large all over him. His eyes rested for a moment on madame's slumbering form in her big chair, then swept the empty spaces quizzically.

'Your fine birds have flown, sweetheart!' he exclaimed, with a boyish laugh.

Mademoiselle was at the window in time to note the direction of their flight. At a glance she understood the imminent results of her coquetry. Pale with sudden fear, she turned and clutched her companion's arm.

'Oh Jack!' she cried, 'they have gone away to fight. Quick! quick! stop them!'

The Englishman laughed again—but very softly, so as not to waken madame—and looked down into her face. He was thinking of her eyes, of her lips; and he only half-heard her words.

'Stop what?' he asked, stooping with a swift movement to kiss her. But she sprang back, angry and frightened.

'Stop them, I say, Jack. They are going to fight, and perhaps they'll kill each other; and it's all my fault. I've been very wicked. Oh! I'll go myself;' and she darted out of the room.

At this he awoke. He caught her before she was out of the house, and clutched her firmly.

'It's an awkward thing, sweet,' said he, 'to interfere between two indignant gentlemen who have a right to disagree in their own way. But if you say so, I'll do it. What shall I say to them? How is it your fault?'

'Oh, stupid! Can't you see how wicked I've been? I've made them both think I cared for them; I've made them furiously jealous! I was so tired waiting for you to come! And now if they're killed I'll never speak to you again.'

Jack Moleby's face broke into a grin of delighted comprehension.

'Wretch,' he retorted, 'I go!' and made off down the snow with long strides. Throwing a hooded cloak about her and thrusting her feet, red shoes and all, into a pair of white, fur-lined moccasins, mademoiselle sped after him.

The winter air was crisp and clear, and with a fine frosty sting in it. There was no wind whatever. There was no sound but the grinding of the tide among the ice-cakes. The light was almost like full day in the little white glade where the two Frenchmen faced each other with swords at the salute. The next moment the sibilant whisper of the steel began, deadly in its soft reserve; and the easy superciliousness of the smile on Barras's lips changed to a look as stern as his adversary's as he felt the dangerous competence of the wrist opposed to him.

The two fought in their vests, their coats lying upon the snow near by. In skill they appeared to be well matched; and De Latour, who had never before met any one at all his equal in fence, began to conceive an unwilling respect for the coxcomb captain. In fact, he had just, by the merest hair-breadth, escaped a scratch; when, from the edge of the grove, a voice of sharp authority rang out 'Halt!' and Captain Jack's tall figure appeared suddenly beside them.

With instant and instinctive obedience both men sprang back and dropped their points; then, in the next second, both turned indignantly upon the intruder.

'Who are you, sir?' demanded De Latour curtly.

'And by what right, if I may ask, do you interfere in our pastime?' inquired Barras.

Captain Jack, who was more embarrassed than he would have cared to show, chose to answer the latter question.

'By no right, gentlemen,' he replied heartily; 'and I beg to apologise in the fullest manner I know, too. I owe you satisfaction for my abruptness, and of course I am quite ready to afford it to you both if you demand it. But I beg you rather to accept my apology.'

'We can discuss that later on,' said De Latour in tones of ice; 'and meanwhile, Captain Barras, with your consent, we will resume.'

But before the blades could cross again the Englishman stepped forward sharply, his own sword half-drawn.

'Really, gentlemen,' he began, in a voice of mastery, 'I must insist that you stop fighting. No more of it, I say!' and his blood began to get hot. Then he remembered that he would certainly not be fulfilling Marie's wishes if he should himself kill one, or perhaps both, of these impetuous and infatuated Frenchmen; and the thought gave him pause. He considered the situation very awkward altogether.

Both men faced him. 'This is astonishing,

truly,' exclaimed Barras, with a biting sneer. 'I think we had better have an explanation before we go on with our own affair.'

But now Jack Moleby had an inspiration. He would try diplomacy. Replacing his sword, and relapsing into his customary large good-humour, he smiled genially upon the scowling faces.

'You see, gentlemen, I hated to disturb you, but I had to do as I was commanded. Mademoiselle de Lalanne sent me with positive orders to stop the fight at any cost. In my stupidity I thought I might have to fight you both, in order to obey her. But I should have known, as soon as I saw the courtly gentlemen you were, that my one effective weapon would be the expression of her wishes. She simply implores you, if her happiness is of any concern to you, that you will do each other no injury. She beseeches you to promise that you will put your quarrel, whatever it may be, for ever by; without which promise she declares that she will live in ceaseless anxiety. I think, gentlemen, from my observation of her solicitude in this matter, that one or the other of you must be honoured by a very distinguished place in her regard.'

Each, on hearing these sagacious words, conceived himself to be the one so honoured. Into De Latour's cold eyes came a gleam of elation.

'Mademoiselle de Lalanne's wishes are a command, monsieur,' said he, sheathing his sword. 'I need no apology from you for having obeyed them. Rather should I wish to hold you to account had you failed to fulfil them to the letter.'

'I thank you, monsieur, with all my heart,' replied Captain Jack, bowing, and biting back a smile. 'And you, monsieur,' he went on, turning to Barras, 'have I grace from you also for my somewhat blundering zeal?'

Barras's face, no longer that of the fearless and inexorable swordsman, wore now a simper of pleased vanity. The coxcomb was back.

'Mademoiselle's wishes are my law,' said he, bowing elaborately; 'and he who carries them out is my ensample.'

With another ceremony to De Latour he slipped his sword back into its place, as if to say, 'Let there be peace between us.'

At this moment mademoiselle came tripping from the grove, the hood of her cloak half-fallen back from her hair. She came up to the Englishman's side, and laid her hand lightly on his arm. Upon the two swordsmen she turned a smile of subjugating sweetness.

'With all my heart I thank you, gentlemen,' she said, 'for your gracious courtesy in yielding to my wishes. Let us go back to the house, and I will ask you to take a glass of wine with me to the long continuance of friendship between two such gallant gentlemen as I well know you to be.'

Both men stood bowing, each with his hand on his heart, and each boiling inwardly at sight of those

small fingers on the Englishman's sleeve. There was a brief pause, during which mademoiselle flushed faintly and her eyelids fluttered down. Then she went on steadily:

'And let me present to you, Captain Barras, and to you, Monsieur De Latour, my dear friend Captain Moleby, of the English garrison at Halifax. It is my prayer, gentlemen, that when your flag and his are again at war, as is like to be soon, he may not find such swords as yours opposed to him, for he is my betrothed. I commend him to your kind goodwill.'

The two Frenchmen met each other's eyes with a glance of mutual comprehension, murmured some inarticulate compliments, and hid their discomfiture in the final bitterness of permitting Captain Jack to help them on with their coats.

It was one of the triumphs of Captain Jack Moleby's career that he did not smile.

'THE VENICE OF THE NORTH.'

Bright sunshine over everything—
Catching and gilding with its magic touch
The burnished domes and spires
Of this fair city of a northern clime,
Where countless waterways reflect
Man's stony, strange devices of a bygone time,
When Nature revelled in her loneliness as queen
Upon the gray, grim rocks which girt blue Maelar's deep;
Whilst all around—o'er forest and holm—
A soft, blue summer haze did hide
The whole bright world below,
In one enchanting sleep.

That age is past—
That dim, that magic time of yore,
When Vikings brave and free—
Fit children of the Asgard heroes old—
Held sway o'er this calm Venice of the North
As Odin's kingdom, undisputed, bold.
Their reign is past, and that of him—
The blue-eyed David of the North*—
Who bare his country's wrongs, the tyrant's yoke, awhile;
Then, in an instant—as yon summer sun
Blazed out—dispersing fierily the foe,
With one stern warning: 'Forth!'

All has not fled:
Nature still holds her regal sway unchecked
E'en to the city doors,†
Where Lake and Sea do meet at last,
And stately ships, with flags of liberty,
Majestically float forth, as in the days long past.
The silver wave still laps the shore
Of many a moss-grown berg and pine-clad hill,
Girding the city in on every side,
Which tint with thousand shades the mirror'd blue beneath,
Proclaiming, by the warble of their birds,
Stockholm is Nature's still!

L. MURIEL RAIKES BROMAGE.

* Gustaf Vasa finally defeated Sweden's Danish oppressor, Christian II., in 1523.

† The locks, to the south of the city, dividing lake and sea.